

REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Consideration of the art cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed August 6, 2009 is requested.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 9-19 are pending in this application, with Claims 1, 7, 13, 16 and 19 being independent.

Claims 1, 7, 13, 16 and 19 have been amended. Applicant submits that support for the amendments can be found in the original disclosure, and therefore no new matter has been added. For example, support for the feature of a common start-up unit can be found at least in the discussion of authentication mechanism start-up unit 203, shown in Fig. 5 and described in the disclosure beginning at page 15, line 3.

Claims 1, 5-7, 11-14, 16, 17, and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,021,496 (Dutcher) in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0028650 (Chen et al.). Claims 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, and 18 were rejected under Section 103 as being unpatentable over the combination of Dutcher and Chen et al. when further combined with U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0087894 (Foley). Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections for the reasons discussed below.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention is directed to an authentication apparatus in which changeover from management of an object of authentication under a first authentication mechanism to management of the object of authentication under a second

authentication mechanism is controlled so that the object of authentication continues to be in an authenticated state in the first authentication mechanism, and is not released from management under the first authentication mechanism, until successful authentication in the second authentication mechanism is verified. In particular, as further recited in Claim 1, the invention of Claim 1 is directed to an apparatus wherein the first authentication mechanism and the second authentication mechanism are managed by a common start-up unit. According to the aforementioned features, the first and second authentication mechanisms are managed by a common platform, and the invention of Claim 1 can avoid the problem where management under the first authentication mechanism is released and then authentication under the second authentication mechanism fails, so that the user is no longer authenticated at all.

Applicant submits that the cited art fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of the present invention recited in Claim 1. In contrast to the invention of Claim 1, Dutcher discloses an authentication mechanism for Windows domains. Chen et al. discloses a PPP authentication mechanism between internet service providers (ISPs). A system disclosed in Chen et al. enables a continuous authentication in a network layer between ISPs when switching authentication services for Internet application services. However, neither Dutcher nor Chen et al. discloses a system where a plurality of authentication mechanisms are commonly managed by a common start-up unit.

The other cited art also fails to disclose or suggest at least the above-mentioned features of Claim 1.

Accordingly, we believe that the present invention recited in Claim 1 is patentable over the cited prior art documents. The other independent claims recite features similar to those of Claim 1 discussed above and are believed patentable for reasons similar to Claim 1.

The dependent claims are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims, as well as for the additional features they recite.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the outstanding objection and rejections, and an early Notice of Allowance are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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